

(Washington, DC)— Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Wisc.) today commented on the groundbreaking of the Milwaukee Builds Initiative, a two-year program that will help train 60 individuals in “green” construction techniques. The project is the result of a \$1 million U.S. Department of Labor Youthbuild Grant to the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board. With these funds, the 60 young workers will build two new homes and rehabilitate one dilapidated home.

“In Milwaukee, we need to increase our focus on equipping people with 21st century skills and getting them back to work,” Congresswoman Moore said. Moore, a longtime supporter of the Youthbuild program model, has been instrumental in securing funding for the Milwaukee program. “Milwaukee Builds is doing just that – helping our residents gear up for the future of the construction industry and preparing our workforce for a new wave of “green” jobs. I am looking forward to the expansion of this initiative and similar efforts in the future.”

“Providing job training is an integral part of empowering our people and making our communities stronger,” said Milwaukee Mayor Barrett.

The Milwaukee Builds program is the direct result of a new mission of the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB) to become the planning, coordinating and monitoring workforce development agency for the Milwaukee area. MAWIB CEO, Don Sykes, wants to see more workers trained to meet the demands of high-growth industries in energy and technology.

“Milwaukee Builds recognizes one of the key barriers limiting workers in the energy efficient and renewable technologies is a shortage of a trained and skilled workforce for the specific industry”.

Sykes envisions the Milwaukee Builds as a national model for providing a pathway out of poverty for many under skilled workers.

“The model can be used to put people back to work by providing employment and training/education for youth and adults in the construction sector” Sykes said.

Milwaukee Builds partners include the MAWIB, the Milwaukee Christian Center, Milwaukee Community Service Corps, Northcott Neighborhood House, Esperanza Unida and the Wisconsin Regional Training Program/BIG STEP. Key supporting partners to the project are Milwaukee Area Technical College, Housing Authority City of Milwaukee and the City of Milwaukee's Community Development Grants Administration. All of these partners are united in the goal of providing a seamless program that leverages community resources in a coordinated fashion to yield stronger results and meaningful skills and job opportunities for the program participants.

###